

Highlights from the Third Meeting of the OSCE PA "Call for Action – Helsinki +50 Process"¹

Discussion on revitalising dialogue in the OSCE

- Looking into the progressive transformation of the European security landscape in the 90s was highlighted as an essential exercise to understand today's lack of political interest in the OSCE.
- Interlocutors suggested that while the OSCE remains the guardian of the cooperative approach to security, the urgency for multilateral, cooperative and constructive dialogue is not meaningfully addressed by States, thus limiting their attention to the Organization.
- Participants noted that bringing a cooperative security approach to the forefront of the political debate can be also achieved through dialogue within and between national parliaments.
- All interlocutors agreed that one of the key elements for reviving dialogue is political will and the PA and its members have tools that can contribute to building it.
- Some participants argued that there might be differing perceptions on key values across the region; however it is important to remember that principles and commitments are common to all pS and that their respect should be the basis for dialogue.

¹ The Highlights from the OSCE PA Call for Action - Helsinki +50 Meetings are not intended to be official conclusions, nor an exhaustive list of all issues raised during the debate, but rather a compilation of points recorded for possible future reference. As this compilation is not exhaustive, any comments or suggested additions are welcome.

Main suggestions

- A comprehensive strategy for revitalising dialogue should take into consideration short- and longer-term realities and needs. Concrete steps forward should not lose sight of the longer term vision and vice-versa.
- Revitalising dialogue requires political will to engage to resolve crises. It is not only important to have an inclusive OSCE but also to ensure that pS perceive the organization as an effective conflict prevention and resolution platform, thus constructively engaging in debate.
- Initiatives aimed at revitalising dialogue in the Organization should be cross-dimensional. Ensuring that declarations and statements are consistently followed by constructive dialogue and political practice is fundamental.
- A retrospective analysis of similar past talks/initiatives is needed in order to improve responses to the current political stalemate and replace intellectual arrogance and dispirited exchanges with constructive and meaningful engagement in dialogue.
- There is a need to invest in an open dialogue on politico-military aspects of security as a potential strategy to reawaken political interest by pS.
- Reevaluating the modalities of the key debate on implementation of OSCE values and commitments is important, taking into account the concern that the “name and shame” debate pattern might be seen as affecting the cultural and political diversity within the OSCE.
- Opening of political discussions to the public – with the exception of negotiation processes - could enhance the Organization’s accountability and visibility, thus generating higher public interest.
- When discussing dialogue revitalization, it is important to involve women equally as men in these processes.

Suggestions for the OSCE PA:

- The OSCE PA is optimally positioned to initiate a broad debate within and between societies and to raise their understanding of security challenges.
- Establishing new relevant Ad hoc group(s) within the PA could be considered, to ensure the active involvement of Civil Society Organizations in the debates.
- The introduction of a procedure requiring the PA's opinion on controversial topics before or in connection with their discussion at the intergovernmental level could work as a dialogue-generating mechanism.
- Amending the rules of the Organization so the PA could propose an agenda item to the PC/MC and call for an OSCE Summit could also have a positive effect on reviving dialogue.
- The establishment of Helsinki Committees by all parliaments of the pS would be a way to revitalise the dialogue within and in connection with the OSCE. The OSCE PA could take into consideration this idea and adopt a resolution to that effect, the implementation of which would be monitored by national delegations assisted by the International Secretariat.
- The parliaments of the pS could address questions to their governments and hold hearings with the foreign ministers, explicitly requesting that they be briefed on a regular bases on the national agenda for the OSCE. The initiatives included in the Facilitator's Perception Paper on consensus as well as some other similar initiatives which will emerge from these debates could also be addressed.
- The PA members could report on a regular basis on their efforts to raise awareness of the OSCE and its commitments in their respective parliaments and in the wider public.